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Elimination of coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion

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Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

Contents

Page

Replies received from Governments 2

Cuba 2

Iraq 2

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Replies received from Governments

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]
[19 July 2000]

1. The Republic of Cuba once again strongly condemns the application of unilateral coercive economic measures as a means of bringing political and economic pressure to bear on developing countries; it considers that the enactment of such measures reveals the true nature of the policy of those countries which call themselves champions of free trade yet at the same time create huge obstacles to the freedom of international trade, using it to try to unilaterally impose their national laws on other countries, thereby flouting the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

2. The application of coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion is not only injurious to the personality of the State concerned and of the political, economic and cultural elements of which it is made up, but also affects other sensitive areas, such as the enjoyment of human rights of the peoples against whom these unilateral policies are directed. Indeed, the Commission on Human Rights itself has repeatedly stated that the application of unilateral coercive economic measures has an adverse effect on the social and humanitarian indicators of developing countries and prevents the peoples subjected to such measures from fully enjoying those rights.

3. The international community has systematically rejected the application of this policy and considers it a flagrant violation of the principles, aims and rules governing international law. Provisions such as those that appear in the Torricelli and Helms-Burton Acts are incompatible with the World Trade Organization agreements and undermine efforts to maintain a multilateral trading system that is increasingly equitable, secure, non-discriminatory, transparent and predictable.

4. The Government of the Republic of Cuba once again condemns all extraterritorial acts that infringe the sovereignty of peoples and it has confidence in the role that the United Nations will play to ensure that the will and decisions of the international community are enforced.

Iraq

[Original: Arabic]
[27 June 2000]

1. Invoking General Assembly resolution 53/10, entitled "Elimination of coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion", the Republic of Iraq affirms its rejection of the use of coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion and of depriving States of their full sovereign right to choose their own political, economic and social systems.

2. The use, even the intimation of the use, of coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion constitutes a flagrant violation of the principles on which the Charter of the United Nations and international law are based and also, as a cardinal matter, of Article 2, paragraph 1, of the Charter, which states that:

> "The Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members."

Such measures are also in manifest breach of the provisions of a large number of United Nations resolutions and international conventions, including the following:

(a) The Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention in the Domestic Affairs of States and the Protection of Their Independence and Sovereignty, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 2131 (XX) of 21 December 1965;

(b) The Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, annexed to General Assembly resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970, which states, inter alia, that:

> "No State or group of States has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, for any reason whatever, in the internal or external affairs of any other State. Consequently, armed intervention and

all other forms of interference or attempted threats against the personality of the State or against its political, economic and cultural elements, are in violation of international law.

"No State may use or encourage the use of economic, political or any other type of measures to coerce another State in order to obtain from it the subordination of the exercise of its sovereign rights and to secure from it advantages of any kind."

(c) The Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 3281 (XXIX) of 12 December 1974, which states, inter alia, that:

"No State may use or encourage the use of economic, political or any other type of measures to coerce another State in order to obtain from it the subordination of the exercise of its sovereign rights."

(d) General Assembly resolution 51/22 of 27 November 1996, in which the Assembly reaffirms the inalienable right of every State to economic and social development and to choose its own political, economic and social system.

3. The General Assembly has also frequently condemned unilateral economic coercion as a means of achieving political objectives. Its resolutions 48/168 of 21 December 1993, 50/96 of 20 December 1995, 51/22 of 27 November 1996 and 53/10 of 26 October 1998 each form a part of the series of responses adopted by the United Nations to these illegal measures.

4. The use of coercive measures as a means of political and economic compulsion, whether unilaterally or under the auspices of regional and international organizations, poses a genuine threat to international peace and security and is in manifest breach of the principles of human rights. The suffering of the people of Libya over an eight-year period and the ongoing suffering of the people of Iraq for the past 10 years offer clear proof that these measures persistently violate basic human rights just as they violate the principles of international public law and international humanitarian law.

5. Experience has shown that the first victims of coercive economic measures are the vulnerable groups in the population, particularly children, women and older persons. As confirmed by the reports of the United Nations agencies and missions themselves, the serious impact on the humanitarian situation of the people of Iraq produced by the insistence of the United States of America on subjecting it to coercive measures of the most heinous kinds, such as the maintenance of the comprehensive economic embargo against the country and preventing it from meeting the basic humanitarian needs of its people, offers tangible and vivid proof of the great danger posed by the adoption of such measures.

6. The international community, as represented by the United Nations, must take resolute and effective steps to deter States from taking measures of this kind, must oppose any attempt on their part to pressure the United Nations or any other multilateral international forum to use such measures as a means of imparting a specious legitimacy to practices that are incompatible with the norms and principles of international law, and must rectify past practices by which the facade of the United Nations was used in order to pursue a policy of mass extermination of peoples.

7. The destinies of peoples and their basic human rights may not under any circumstances become an instrument to be exploited by certain international Powers for purposes of political blackmail and economic subjugation. To permit such policies to continue would mean the destruction of the basic underpinnings of the United Nations and the principles of human rights, and particularly of the right to a life of dignity.